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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 MADRID 002159

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FROM THE AMBASSADOR FOR DASD DAN FATA;
STATE FOR EUR DAS VOLKER AND EUR/WE

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [SP](#)
SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR DASD FATA VISIT TO MADRID

Classified By: Ambassador Eduardo Aguirre for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C/NF) Embassy Madrid, implementing Secretary Rice's US-Spain strategy, has worked with considerable focus over the past year to put the Spain-US relationship back onto a productive footing. As an important player not only in NATO but also in Latin America, the Middle East, and increasingly around the globe, Spain is a serious partner in implementing our global agenda. Although the Zapatero government does not march in lockstep with US policy, it increasingly supports USG priorities in such places as Lebanon, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Congo. Spain continues to allow robust use of its Rota and Moron military bases by our assets moving around the Med and in and out of the Middle East. It contributes to the NATO Training Mission-Iraq. It has delivered results in Nicaragua and Bolivia. Spain and the US cooperate closely on counterterrorism. With patience and clarity, we can often get what we want from Spain. We have found that it is worth the effort.

12. (C/NF) The US and Spanish militaries have a strong 50-year old relationship based on shared use of the Spanish bases and training/exchange programs. The US military worked with the Spanish military in the 1950s and 1960s when European countries wouldn't, and the Spaniards haven't forgotten. From General Sanz and Admiral Torrente on down, key Spanish officers have spent time in US and have come back as fans. They are instinctively pro-US on politics, tactics, and equipment. That said, these same officers are proud Spaniards and react badly when they feel that Spain is being taken for granted or being treated as less than the solid middleweight democracy that it has become.

13. (C/NF) Washington leaders have engaged heavily with Spanish leaders over the past year in pursuit of still greater cooperation on global issues. Secretary Rice recently hosted a lunch in Washington for Foreign Minister Moratinos. She came away with a pledge to fund reconstruction projects in Iraq and a reinforced sense of Spain's commitment to Afghanistan. She intends to visit Madrid in the fall. Assistant Secretaries Dan Fried and Tom Shannon used meetings here with their counterparts to close the gap between Spain and the US on issues like Cuba and Venezuela. DAS Scott Carpenter has been in Madrid several times to discuss our Broader Middle East/North Africa strategy and Spain is contributing \$1 million to the Foundation for the Future. EUR DAS Kurt Volker discussed NATO Summit and preparations for Spain's chairmanship of the OSCE during his recent visit. Assistant Secretary Jendayi Frazer will soon have a similar meeting to set common priorities for Africa. These high-level meetings have shown results.

14. (C/NF) After five months in the job, Defense Minister

Alonso continues to be an advocate for a positive bilateral relationship. I have met privately with him a number of times and find him to be a reliable and substantive interlocutor. Although Alonso is a judge by profession and does not have a background in defense or military issues, he has proved to be an able leader at MOD, just as he was as the Interior Minister. During his time at Interior, we enjoyed excellent cooperation from that ministry on counterterrorism and legal issues. Alonso was pleased to be able to begin a dialogue with Secretary Rumsfeld at the NATO Ministerial and he looks forward to continuing that dialogue in Washington in October. We should plan now to take full advantage of his trip to show him the best that the US military has to offer (as his top military leaders have already seen) and to educate him on issues of interest to us and him such as China. Minister Alonso is close to President Zapatero, among the few in the inner circle, and our efforts will not be wasted.

15. (C/NF) The issues that you discuss and the tone of your discussions during your visit to Madrid will set the stage for Alonso's meeting with Secretary Rumsfeld. Spain has stepped up on Lebanon, and MOD will be glad to talk about its troop contributions and efforts to lead a multi-national brigade. Spain feels a direct national security interest in Mediterranean and Middle East security issues, and in this case is acting on it. On Afghanistan, the GOS has remained rock solid even though the Spanish public doesn't have much interest in the mission. We should show our appreciation not only for the reconstruction efforts of the Spanish PRT, but for their willingness to host a US foreign service officer at the PRT and for the support that the Spanish quick reaction force has provided to the nearby US-led PRT. The GOS is proud of the humanitarian work that it is doing in western

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Afghanistan, and we are encouraging increased Spanish contributions to the Ring Road project.

16. (C/NF) The GOS has signaled that it is ready to slowly re-engage on Iraq. It has pledged \$22 million, in partnership with the USG, to finish construction of the Basra Children's Hospital and offered to fund education projects as well. It trained several groups of Iraqi security forces in demining techniques under NTM-I. When DAS Kurt Volker was here, ADM Torrente told him that Spain is willing to consider other specific training and aid requests (e.g., training of staff officers on military-MOD relations) as Iraq is able to articulate them. In NATO, as in other areas, we have seen an improvement in tone since Alonso's arrival at MOD. Spain lobbied Kyrgyzstan on our behalf regarding Manas air base and supported our candidate for NATO SCR in Afghanistan. While he is explicitly interested in European answers to security and defense issues, Alonso is still learning NATO issues and is willing to consider our positions.

17. (C/NF) Two clouds have darkened the otherwise bright defense relationship during the past year. One is Venezuela. It is a mistake for Spain to support Hugo Chavez with a major defense sale. We have made repeatedly made that clear to the highest levels of the GOS. While the airplane part of the deal has crumbled under the pressure of our refusal to license technology, the ships are beginning to be built. The strongest advocate for the sale was ex-Minister Bono, and he is now long gone. Minister Alonso is no great fan of the sale, but neither is he going to pull the plug on a major ship-building contract that is providing hundreds of jobs.

18. (S/NF) The second issue is NCIS/OSI. It is a serious problem for both sides. We need effective access for our investigators to guarantee protection for our forces. The GOS needs to be involved and aware of what happens in its sovereign territory. The GOS took a hard line on this issue under the Aznar government, and its position has only toughened as the Zapatero government has had to publicly confront the CIA flights. This is an issue on which the GOS

has been more clear, if perhaps not more patient, than the USG. The people with whom you are meeting have been personally and continually involved with this issue for several years, while our negotiators, at times negotiating positions that DOD eventually reversed, have come and gone. I encourage you to listen as the MOD policy makers articulate their position. Our goal is to resolve the NCIS/OSI issue without jeopardizing our ability to use the Spanish naval base at Rota and the air base at Moron, which have been key transportation and support sites for both OEF and OIF. Senior US military officials have repeatedly made clear to me the importance of these bases for both Middle East and Africa counter-terrorism and related operations. For this reason, I have sought to ensure that we handle the NCIS issue in a way that preserves these equities without prejudicing our Naval investigative and intelligence concerns.

19. (S/NF) One other cloud is looming on the horizon: the possible cold-basing of Moron. I have been briefed on USAFE's plan, which I understand has now also been briefed to General Jones. General Jones and I talked about this issue before his briefing. I told him that we will support whatever decision makes sense militarily but that turning Moron into a turnkey operation would not be the path that I would wish for as I seek to make Spain a stronger partner in the global agenda. If DOD decides to go forward with the plans, we will need to plan a careful rollout strategy that deftly engages the GOS. Though this has nothing to do with NCIS/OSI, the two issues could easily become mixed together, creating a situation that is potentially damaging to the overall bilateral relationship.

AGUIRRE